



Blue Ribbon Commission on Tax Reform – 2012

Public Hearing – Louisville

July 10, 2012

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Statement by Jodi Mitchell, Executive Director, Kentucky Voices for Health

Kentucky's health economics must promote healthy, wealthy and wise Kentuckians. The reality is that far too many Kentuckians are unhealthy, poor and uneducated. This puts the Commonwealth at a competitive disadvantage that is difficult, but not impossible to overcome.

If we are to break this cycle, Kentucky must take a different approach that recognizes the link between quality health and quality education and the need to adequately fund both.

Kentucky must not allow persistent funding shortages to force a choice between health and education when the two are inextricably linked. Simply put, it should not be "either-or" but "both-and"!

There are proven, common-sense solutions that can lead to a healthier Kentucky...but we must think more broadly and long term.

We must look at long term, systemic solutions to problems, not short term fixes.

We must look at achieving quality health for our children as a necessary condition for improving our education outcomes.

Kentucky must adequately fund BOTH health and education if we are going to have economic prosperity. Over time, working to prevent and treat chronic health conditions like diabetes, obesity, and substance abuse that plague our children and families will benefit Kentucky's educational system...healthier kids are better learners.